



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP  
State Health Commissioner

*Department of Health*

P O BOX 2448  
RICHMOND, VA 23218

May 1, 2009

TTY 7-1-1 OR  
1-800-828-1120

Dear Virginia College and University Students:

As your Health Commissioner, I want to congratulate all of you on your accomplishments this year, especially the many thousands of our students who will be graduating over the next several weeks.

All of us have been following the reports of H1N1 influenza (swine flu) across our country, and I recently announced that the first two cases of H1N1 influenza have been confirmed in Virginia. It is likely that there will be more cases. The urgent challenge for all Virginians is to do all we can to prevent the spread of influenza in our state and to keep the number of cases as low as possible.

You are a very important part of this leadership process. Students tend to travel frequently, to be involved in many social activities and to occasionally have a sense of invulnerability to illness. All of these factors place students at a higher risk than the general population for such contagious illnesses as H1N1 influenza.

I need you to help us reduce this risk by following a few simple guidelines:

- If you are experiencing influenza-like symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, headaches, chills or fatigue,
  - **Stay home from school or work**, limit your contact with others.
  - Call your student health director, health care provider or local health department before seeking care so that the necessary infection control practices can be put in place.
  - If you have recently traveled to an area with confirmed cases of H1N1, you should expect that your health care provider will advise you not to return to campus until you have received medical clearance. General guidelines are that this will be seven days after the onset of your illness. The most current list of locations where there are confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza can be found on the website of the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/).
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water; alcohol-based cleaners can also be effective.
- Prevent the spread of germs by avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

We have established an H1N1 influenza information line at 1-877-275-8343 if you or members of your family have any questions or concerns. For further information, you also visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) or the Virginia Department of Health website at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov).

H1N1 influenza is in Virginia. I need each one of you to follow these guidelines to help us keep your family, your colleagues and your neighbors safe from this serious illness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Karen Remley", written over a horizontal line.

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP  
State Health Commissioner